

DURHAM  
WESTERN  
HERITAGE  
MUSEUM



Eric P. Newman  
6450 Cecil Avenue  
St. Louis, Missouri 63105

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Dear Mr. Newman,

What a pleasure it was to speak with you on the telephone the other day. I look forward to meeting with you this coming Tuesday, May 19th. I will call you prior to that time to set up an exact time.

I have enclosed a broad outline of what is going to be the Byron Reed Gallery. The Gallery itself (c. 2,000 sq. ft.) will be comprised of three contiguous "rooms:" the Real Estate Office, the Main Gallery, and the Library. These rooms will actually all be in one large gallery, with different flooring, wall textures/colors, and placement of display cases signaling to the visitor they are entering a different area.

The Real Estate office will be a loosely-based rendition of Byron Reed's original real estate building located in downtown Omaha circa 1860. It will have a plank floor, some simple furniture and wood stove, and seven display panels on the walls. Each display panel covers one aspect of Byron Reed's life, as illustrated through various objects such as his original real estate license, a telegraph key, letters from Grover Cleveland, etc. No coins will be displayed in this area.

The largest section of the Gallery will be devoted to a display of the coins, medals, tokens and currency. Currently, we are looking at about twenty-two different wall panels, each covering a different aspect of numismatics (as represented in the Reed collection). The number in parenthesis on the outline sheet is the approximate number of coins that will be displayed at each section. About 10-15 coins will be displayed in the glass-(actually acrylic) paned enclosures; the remaining coins will be in drawers underneath the display panel. The visitor pulls open the (steel, alarmed) drawer and views (beneath acrylic glass) the coins resting in rows within the drawer. For example, we can have the ten or so best examples of sutler tokens on display for the casual visitor, while the serious coin buff can open the drawer and look at the other 80+ examples from the Reed collection.

The Library is a recreation of Reed's library. Here we enlarge the story of Reed the collector by demonstrating what it was like to collect coins or documents in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century. This is where Reed's 1804 dollar and chant book, the two most important objects to him, will be displayed. This is also where the documents, books, pictures, autographs, and other paper objects from the collection will be shown. With the exception of the two treasure objects, the remainder of the items in this area will rotate after about one year.

"Collectors Corner" will be the last panel before the visitor exits the gallery. It basically poses the question "What do you collect?" and has a 3-month rotating display of a local collector's treasures. First up is a nice collection of Nebraska GAR material; three months later we have scheduled a fine collection of Omaha-area merchant tokens, then some Nebraska political badges, etc.

The final room is a Resource room (9' x 25') that will contain books (along two and one half walls) and equipment necessary for further research (along the other one and one half walls). We will have a digital scale with a readout to 1/1000th of a gram, a stereo-microscope, an ultrasonic cleaner, and other research aids. There will also be a computer with a database of the entire collection, plus chairs, desks and tables for coin club meetings or other small-group activities. The computer will link to other numismatic sites via the Internet.

An important part of the resource room will be the library, which currently consists of three main groups of books. The first, unavailable to the general public, are Byron Reed's numismatic books (about 120) plus all of his coin catalogs. These will be on display behind glass-doored bookcases.

The second part of the library consists of about \$1,500 worth of books I purchased in the past six months to catalog the collection (maybe another 40 books). These include the current edition of all the standard reference books as well as old standbys (Fuld, Coffee, Krause, Rulau, Schenkman, Pollack, Overton, Breen, etc., etc.). These may be used by the visitor while in the Resource Center, but may not be removed from the room.

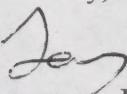
The third part of the library consists of about 300 numismatic books purchased from the University of Nebraska State Museum (natural history). These books are primarily on ancient and medieval coins and all date 1975 or earlier. It does contain 14 or so volumes of the British Museum series on ancient coins, which is the primary reason we purchased the collection. These also must be used in the Resource Center.

We will have approximately 180 shelf feet of book space, which is enough room for a couple of thousand books and journals. I have a much larger area available for storing additional books that are not used as often (like some dealer catalogs, etc.). I hope to build the library part up gradually to where I have a first-class numismatic library.

Hopefully this outline gives you an idea of what we are attempting to do here. I will explain everything in greater detail when we meet; these notes should start your ideas flowing.

Thank you again for agreeing to look at our ideas and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

  
Lawrence J. Lee  
Curator, the Byron Reed Collection